Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

b

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

1.9
I-n3Hh
DEC 31 1929
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat Wednesday, January 1, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Winter Play Suits for Children." Approved by Bess M. Viemont, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Leaflet available: "Play Suits for Winter."

--oOo--

I am so intrigued by the new leaflet, "Play Suits for Winter," that I took a copy home, to show Uncle Ebenezer.

"So that's the new leaflet you've been telling me about," said he. "It looks quite attractive. Seems to me you women folks pay lots of attention to children's clothes, these days. When I was a kid --"

"What did you wear when you were very young?" I asked.

"When I was very young," said Uncle Ebenezer, putting on his thinking cap, "I had a blue velvet suit, with brass buttons, which I wore to Sunday school. I had curls, long curls which hung to my shoulders, like this. What are you laughing at, Aunt Sammy?"

"Nothing. I just can't imagine-- Go on, please."

"As I was saying, I wore curls, but I was so ashamed of them that my father took pity on me, and cut them off. My mother wept for two hours."

"What did you wear to play in, on cold winter days?"

"I wore my father's clothes, cut down to fit me. Instead of a cap, I wore a 'comforter,' a long scarf which wrapped around my head, crossed in front, and tied in back, so that the ends hung down. Warm, but not comfortable. One thing I was particularly proud of was a pair of red-top boots, with copper toes. Of course we wore red flannel underwear, all winter. Flannel, especially red flannel, was supposed to ward off rheumatism. When I went out to play, I was bundled up in many wraps, coats and shawls -- entirely too many clothes for comfort. But my mother was a very busy person, with her six boys and two daughters to sew for, and she didn't have time to figure out the kind of clothes which would be best for us. She didn't have the advantages of you present-day women, who profit by all these studies made by clothing specialists. Do you know the author of this leaflet, Aunt Sammy?"

"Indeed I do. I know Miss Viemont, who write the leaflet, and I have seen the play suits illustrated in the leaflet. I wish every mother of small children could see the clever suits Miss Viemont made."

"Seems to me," said Uncle Ebenezer, "that they are pretty well described in this leaflet. Can't you send the leaflet to whoever wants it?"

Of course I can, and that is what I am going to do. You can't all come to Washington, to see these suits, which are now on exhibit at the Bureau of Home Economics, but you can do the next best thing, which is to send for the leaflet, and see the pictures of the suits, on real children.

Children's clothing must be comfortable. All their garments, especially play suits, should permit freedom and natural movement of the body. Now that outdoor exercise is being emphasized more and more, clothes which will keep the youngster warm on a cold day and still allow freedom in play are in great demand.

We don't have to go back 60 years to remember how uncomfortably children used to be dressed for play. So many wraps -- it's a wonder we got any outdoor exercise at all! The weight of play suits should be as light as possible, because too heavy clothing does not encourage play, and may cause such defects as round shoulders.

What should play-suits be made of? The most desirable fabrics are warm, light in weight, soft, pliable, moisture-proof, and closely woven or knitted. A soft, closely woven, fuzzy cloth may be much warmer than a harsh, smooth, leathery fabric. What about knitted materials, and sweater suits? They are elastic, and fit snugly, but they are less warm than woven materials, because the stitches are far apart, and the wind can blow through.

For many years, wool fabrics were considered the only ones that would really hold in heat. Recently, however, cotton materials that compare favorably with the wools, are appearing on the market.

When children play out of doors, they must be kept dry. Cloth may be woven so tightly that it sheds moisture, or it may be treated so that it will turn off water, and slushy snow.

Children love bright colors; their delight in bright reds and blues and greens can be used to advantage when selecting outside garments. You know how often children dart across the street, in the path of motorists. Outside wraps of gray, tan, brown, navy blue, and black, blend in with the background, but a bright blue or green, red, or orange, provides a sort of "safety zone" around the youngster.

When Johnny Junior goes out to play, shall he wear a one-piece play suit, or a two-piece suit? Remember that Johnny is a modern youngster; his mother wants him to learn to help himself. Johnny's mother knows that by learning to dress himself, he will not only grow self-reliant and independent, but his small fingers will be trained to perform correctly the many tasks that will follow in later years. So Johnny wears a one-piece play suit.

I won't attempt to describe all the self-help ideas in Miss Viemont's leaflet -- you'll just have to see the leaflet yourself.

You'll be glad she makes suits with nice big buttons and loops, instead of snaps and hooks which mash down easily; pocket closing with sliding fasteners, belts with tab extensions for the buttonholes. Buttons in the back of a suit are such a bother, because they are out of sight, and out of reach of chubby hands. And how could Johnny Junior ever learn to be independent, and dress himself, if he had to run to mother every time he wanted to be buttoned up? He couldn't, that's all there is to it. But make him the right kind of a suit, with "all modern improvements," and see how quickly he'll learn to dress himself.

Miss Viemont suggests clever methods of doing away with tight sleeves, tight restricting bands -- all these little annoyances which hamper children's games.

And pockets -- she hasn't forgotten that every small boy, and every small girl, needs a pocket. Johnny Junior could not get along without his pockets -- for where could he put his "valuables"? There's that piece of red string, for instance. Of course, he may have no immediate use for that, but then a fellow never can tell when he'll need a piece of red string. It's well to have it ready, in one's pocket. And then there are two or three pebbles, and a funny-looking piece of something that looks like a -- well, I hope you're not finicky, it looks like a crab's claw. What do you know about that! Johnny Junior picked that up on the beach last summer, and he has been carrying it around ever since!

I didn't intend to describe any of the suits this morning, but shall I say a few words about the aviator suit? It is really a rain suit, made from a shower-proofed, woolen material which will keep the child warm as well as dry. The upper part of the back laps down over the drop seat, so that moisture is turned off, and does not run down inside the suit. There are tabs on the belt, which extend toward the front about three inches, and carry the side buttonholes, where they can be reached by the child. Instead of having a button in the middle of the back closing, there are two side-center buttons. These divide the "pull," so that it comes from the shoulders, rather than from the neck and crotch. These fastenings are also easily seen and reached.

What I like particularly about this suit is the leatherette reinforcements, on the knees, elbows, and seat. They make the suit more masculine, and give extra protection. Dress Johnny Junior in this play suit, with the cunning little aviator cap, and he will be conquering new worlds, while he plays in the sand.

Once more, let me suggest that if you have small boys and girls to sew for, you send for the new free leaflet, "Play Suits for Winter."

Tomorrow: "How to Live Happily on Your Income.